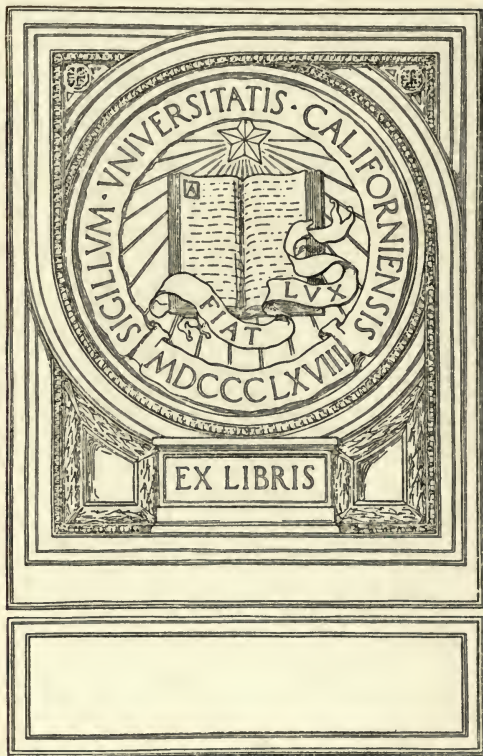


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THE STORY OF A
LITERARY
CAREER



BY

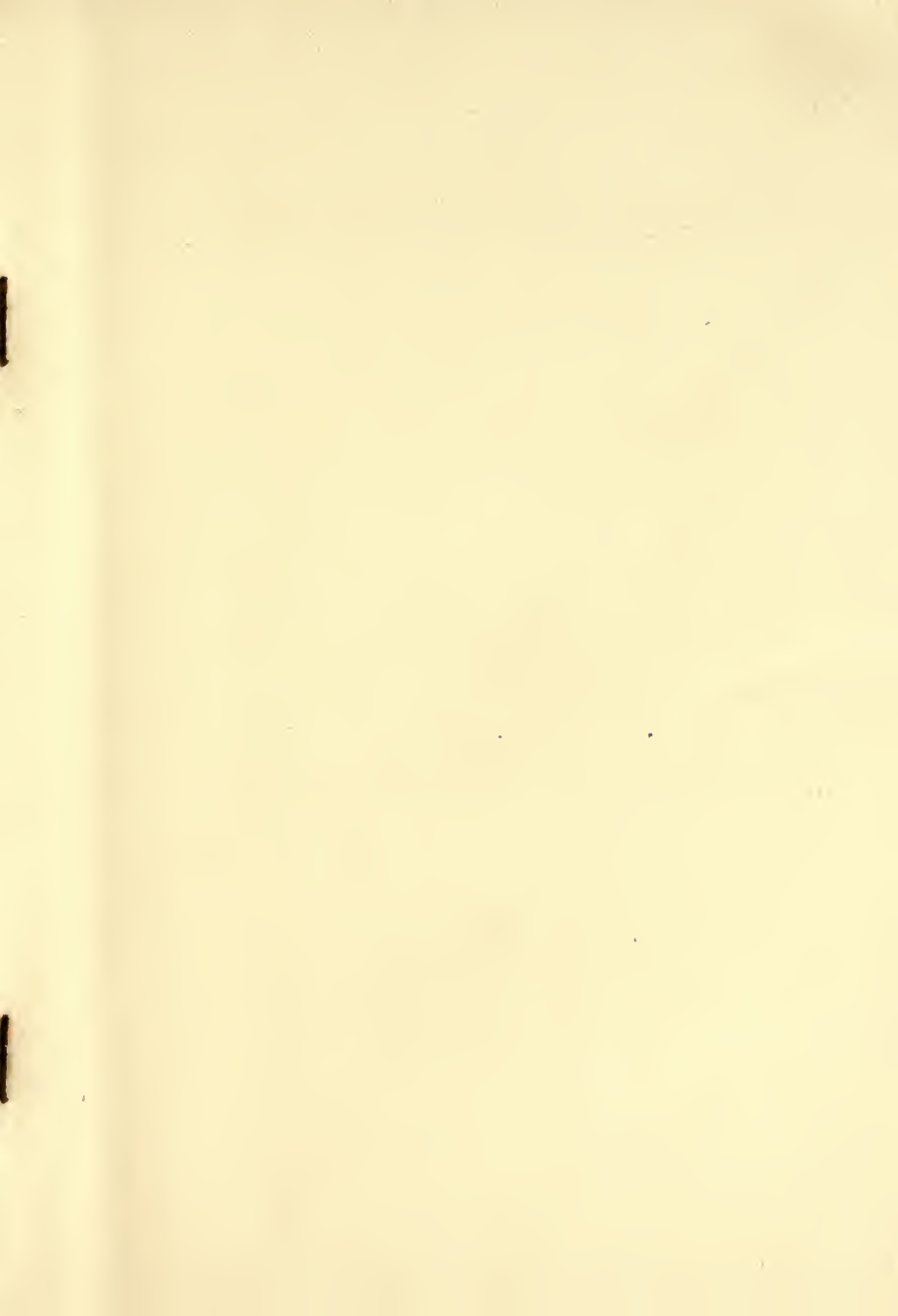
ELLA WHEELER WILCOX



With description
of Mrs. Wilcox's
Home and Life,
.... by

ELLA GILES RUDDY





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ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

THE STORY OF A LITERARY CAREER

BY

Mrs. ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.
11

With Description of Mrs. Wilcox's Home and Life,

by

ELLA GILES RUDDY.

PRICE, 50 CENTS.

PUBLISHED BY

ELIZABETH TOWNE,
HOLYOKE, MASS.



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ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

TO THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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FOREWORD.



N almost every hamlet and village in America, one or more Literary Clubs exist.

The study of living authors, is a part of their curriculum. Ella Wheeler Wilcox, like all well known American authors, receives innumerable requests from the Secretaries of Literary Societies for information concerning her life, methods and works.

During a recent visit at her home, the tax upon her time, clippings and patience by such requests was observable, and a suggestion was made to her that the material desired by Literary Clubs be supplied in book form.

This suggestion resulted in the present little booklet, which the Publisher takes pleasure in presenting to the public.

ELIZABETH TOWNE.

MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY.



OME one asked me, not long ago, when it was that I first conceived the idea of a literary profession and at what age I first found myself something of a celebrity.

I do not remember when I did not expect to be a writer, and I was a neighborhood "celebrity" at the age of eight.

The youngest of my mother's children, I seemed to have had my career arranged for me by conditions before my birth.

It has always been my belief that children inherit the suppressed tendencies of their parents. A clergyman's son frequently shows abnormal tastes for the pleasures that his father denied himself; and talent is quite often the full-blown

flower of a little shoot which circumstance has crushed under its heel in a former generation.

So at the age of eight I began to compose prose and rhyme, because the literary tendencies of my mother had never been gratified. The poetical gift was no doubt greatly the result of her having accidental access to a library of the poets, for the first time in her life, the year previous to my advent, and the happiest and most hopeful year of her life.

Until I reached the age of fourteen, the neighborhood and the school satisfied me as an audience. I hailed composition-day with an eagerness equaled only by my terror of an examination in mathematics. It is human to love to shine, and equally human to dislike being humiliated in our fellow-beings' eyes. One of the most depressing days in my life was when I

stood twenty in a scale of one hundred in mathematics.

My early literary outlook was not one which would encourage most aspirants. My family had left a comfortable, even a luxurious, home for those days, in Vermont to seek fortune in the new West—Wisconsin—before the year of my birth.

My father had been a music teacher all his life, and when he attempted to become a business man and speculator, he made a failure of it. By the time I was a year or two old, he had lost the little competence he brought West with him, and the family (two parents and four children, including myself) was obliged to begin life anew, at the foot of the ladder, upon a Western prairie, twelve miles distant from the nearest town. This town was Madison, Wisconsin's capital.

I had no literary advisers or coaches. My parents were intellectual; my mother was a great reader of whatever came in her way, and was possessed of a wonderful memory. The elder children were excellent scholars, and a grammatical error was treated as a cardinal sin in the household. But no one knew anything about the methods of getting into print, and we had no literary associates. We were, in truth, while poor in worldly goods and knowledge and customs, the solitary intellectual aristocrats of the locality.

We had few books and only a weekly newspaper. In an old red chest upstairs were religiously preserved copies of "The Arabian Nights," "Gulliver's Travels," "John Gilpin's Ride" and a few of Shakespeare's plays. The "New York Ledger" and the "New York Mercury" were sent to us by relatives for several

years, and the first literary feasts I indulged in were the weekly serial stories of Mrs. Southworth and May Agnes Fleming. They were like tobasco sauce to the appetite—exciting but not healthful. They gave me false ideas of life and added to my discontent with my lonely environment. There was nothing in my situation to cultivate poetical talent, and I no doubt owe my early development as a poet to that fact—paradoxical as the statement may seem. —

Born with intense cravings for pleasure, I should have been the veriest amusement-seeker in my youth, had not Necessity stood at my elbow. Whatever genuine talent we possess must reveal itself in time; but my early start in my profession was due to my desire to change and enlarge my horizon and better the conditions of the home, where no one was contented.

At the age of nine I completed a novel of eleven chapters headed with original rhymes. (I have it still, bound in paper which I took from a loose panel on the kitchen wall.)

It was soon after this period that I saw my first editor. He came from Madison with a railroad official to ask for subscriptions for some proposed new line of railroad. He came in a "covered carriage" —my idea of elegance and wealth, as I rarely saw anything better than lumber wagons or run-about. I came from school, a long mile walk, on a hot summer afternoon, tired and curious to know who was within. As I entered the room some member of the family presented me, and the editor took me on his knee.

"You look as delicate as a city girl," he said. "You ought to be more robust, living in this fine country air." Editors

have said many kind things of me since then, but nothing which ever gave me such a sense of being a superior being as that. To look like a city girl—what joy! Yet I had never seen a city girl then, I am sure.

During my thirteenth year the "New York Mercury" ceased to come to us. I missed its weekly visits with an intensity scarcely to be understood by one who has not known the same lonely surroundings and possessed the same temperament. There was not money enough floating around in those times to permit a subscription to the "Mercury," and if I were to possess it I knew I must either obtain a long list of subscribers, which would be a difficult and laborious undertaking, or earn it by my pen.

I resolved to try. But fearing failure, I did not want the family to know of

my venture. I wrote two essays—just what the subjects were I have forgotten, and the clippings were lost years since. How to post my letter was the next question. I often acted as mail carrier to the post office, five miles distant, riding across fields and over fences on my graceful single-footer, Kitty, in company with a schoolmate, Alice Ellis, who possessed a Shetland pony. We rode without saddles, blanketing and bridling our own steeds—and it is fortunate I did not live in Buffalo Bill's vicinity or my career might have terminated in the Wild West Show.

While I could post a letter unknown to my family, the stamp had first to be obtained. Finally I decided on a stragem. I was corresponding with a young girl, several years my senior, who was in the freshman class at Madison University. I confided in her, enclosed the "Mercury"

letter, and assured her she would be reimbursed for the stamp when we next met. I would save my pennies for that purpose.

Jean posted my letter and watched the newstand for results. Two months later, long after I had relinquished all hope, she wrote me that my essays had appeared. Whereupon I wrote a stern reproof to the editor for not sending me the paper, "at least, as pay for my work," if he could afford no other remuneration. Shortly afterward a large package of back numbers of the "New York Mercury" came addressed to me through the country post office.

Even at that immature period I had a wooer—a young man past voting age, possessed of a mustache, a tenor voice and no visible means of support. He played the violin and sang "This night or never

my bride thou shalt be" in a truly fascinating manner. He had been given to understand (by the family) that his room was preferable to his company, however, and had ceased to call. When the enormous roll of newspapers direct from the editor's office came to me, a stern senior member of the household at once concluded that the lovelorn swain had subscribed to win new favor in my eyes. This accusation was made before I was questioned on the subject. Perhaps the most triumphant and dramatic hour of my life was when I stepped forth, in short skirts and long ringlets, and announced to the family that not my would-be lover, but my literary work had procured the coveted "Mercury" for our united enjoyment.

The world seemed to grow larger and life more wonderful from that hour. I was then fourteen.

I wrote to Jean and asked her to send me a list of all the weeklies and monthlies she could find in the bookstands, and to each and every one I sent essays, stories and poems with enthusiasm and persistency. Every penny was saved for postage, and the family entered into my ambitions with encouraging faith in my success.

I soon filled the house with all the periodicals we had time to read, and in addition the editors sent me books and pictures and bric-a-brac and tableware—articles from their prize lists, which were more precious than gems would have been to me. They served to relieve the bare and commonplace aspect of the home, and the happiness I felt in earning these things with my pen is beyond words to describe. It is a curious incident that the first bit of silverware which came into

the home was manufactured by the house with which the man whose name I am fortunate in bearing today was afterward associated.

The very first verses I sent for publication were unmercifully "guyed" by my beloved "Mercury." The editor urged me to keep to prose and to avoid any further attempts to rhyme. He said that while this criticism would wound me temporarily, it would eventually confer a favor on me and the world at large.

I recall only two stanzas of that unfortunate poem. It related the woes of a lovelorn maiden, and I described her as

"She flew to her room, locked and bolted the door,
And in anguish and grief threw herself on the floor."

This is precisely what I did when I read the editor's cruel comment. Yet, after the first despair wore off, I set to work with new fervor and determination

and sent poems and essays and stories to the "Saturday Evening Post," "Demorest's," "Peterson's" and "Arthur's" magazines, "Harper's," "Leslie's" and a score more of periodicals. My first published poem appeared in the "Waverley Magazine."

About the time I appeared in print I left the country school. My record there had been wretched in mathematics, while excellent in grammar, spelling and reading. I lost interest in study and my mind would not focus itself upon school books. I lived in a world of imagination and pictured for myself a wonderful future. In this I was encouraged at home by the ambitions of my mother, who despised her life and felt herself and her family superior to all her associates, and was forever assuring me (and them as well!) that my future would be wholly apart from my early companions.

Fortunately for me and for all concerned, I was a healthy and normal young animal and fond of my comrades and enjoying their sports, into which I entered with zest despite my mental aspirations and literary tendencies. I was passionately fond of dancing and at fifteen attended the merrymakings of the grown-up girls and young men of the neighborhood, looking with disdain upon a boy of my own age. An elder brother and sister felt concerned at my lack of education and my propensity for pleasure, and the family made great sacrifices and managed to send me off to Madison University at about this time.

I was not at all happy there; first, because I knew the strain it put upon the home purse; second, because I felt the gulf between myself and the town girls, whose gowns and privileges revealed to

me, for the first time, the different classes in American social life; and third, because I wanted to write and did not want to study. I had lost all taste for school books.

On composition day I undertook to distinguish myself by writing a "narrative," as the class was requested, but my ardent love-story only called forth a kind rebuke from gentle Miss Ware, and I was told to avoid reading the "New York Ledger."

After one term I begged my mother to allow me to remain at home and write, and she wisely consented.

I took to my profession with a new ardor and enthusiasm after that.

My first check came from Frank Leslie's publishing house. I wrote asking for one of his periodicals to be sent me in return for three little poems I had com-

posed in one day. In reply came a check for ten dollars, saying I must select which one of some thirteen publications they issued at that time.

This bit of crisp paper opened a perfect floodgate of aspiration, inspiration and ambition for me. I had not thought of earning money so soon. I had expected to obtain only books, magazines and articles of use and beauty from the editor's prize lists, and I had not supposed verses to be salable. I wrote them because they came to me, but I expected to be a novelist like Mrs. Southworth and May Agnes Fleming in time—that was the goal of my dreams. The check from Leslie was a revelation. I walked, talked, thought and dreamed in verse after that. A day which passed without a poem from my pen I considered lost and misused. Two each day was my idea of industry, and I

once achieved eight. They sold—the majority—for three dollars or five dollars each. Sometimes I got ten dollars for a poem—that was always an event. Short love stories, over which I labored painfully, as story writing was an acquired habit, also added to my income bringing me ten or fifteen dollars and once in a while larger sums from “Peterson’s,” “Demorest’s,” “Harper’s Bazar” and the “Chimney Corner.”

Everything in life was material for me—my own emotions, the remarks or experiences of my comrades and associates, sentences from books I read and some phases of nature.

At a Thanksgiving Eve ball I recollect waltzing with a very good looking young man whom I met there for the first time. The band played one of Strauss’ waltzes. As we floated about the hall I thought

to myself, "If I were desperately in love with this man and he cared for some one else, this waltz would sound like a dirge to me." So the next day I wrote a little poem called "The Dirge" (which paid for my slippers), and was widely copied.

"The Waltz-Quadrille," one of my most popular early verses, was similarly conceived. I had promised the quadrille at a commencement ball at Madison University to a man on the eve of a journey who was unable to find me when the number was called. Although I did not have the pleasure of a dance with him, I wrote the poem and sent him a copy of it, saying, "This is the way I should have felt had I been in love with you and had I danced the waltz-quadrille with you just before your departure from Madison."

The editors seemed to want these heart-wails, and once returned a historical poem

I ventured to write, saying, "Send us little heartache verses—those are what our readers like."

A new line of railroad came through the county and we had three mails a week and a post office only three miles away. My good single-pacer was sold, but my father had taken an old horse, "Burney," in trade, and my brothers had purchased a light top-buggy. I used to write my daily stint of several poems and perhaps a story and with a half dozen manuscripts addressed to as many editors, I would harness old Burney and drive to the post office with my brain wares, and great was the day when I brought home a check. Harper paid me fifteen dollars for one poem, Leslie sent me a check of forty dollars for ten poems and a short story, "The Saturday Evening Post" sent me a set of Dickens, all within a period

of six months after my first money success.

It seemed wonderful to me and to the family and to the neighbors.

Until I began to earn money the neighbors had criticized my mother for keeping me out of the kitchen and allowing me to "scribble" so much. But when they found me able with one day's work at my desk to hire an assistant in the house for a month they began to respect my talent.

I often wish the scores of grown men and women who write to me for "aid and influence" in getting into print could know just how I found my way into the favor of editors. It was by sheer persistence. It never occurred to me to ask advice or assistance of strangers. I am glad it did not, for the moment we lean upon any one but the Divine Power and

the divinity within us we lessen our chances of success. I often receive letters now from writers in the West asking me to use my influence with editors in their behalf and saying, "You must realize from your own early struggles how impossible it is to get a start in an Eastern periodical without a friend at court." No more absurd idea ever existed. Eastern editors are on the lookout for new talent constantly and if a writer possesses it, together with persistence, he will succeed whether he lives in the Western desert or in the metropolis and without any friend at court.

I frequently sent out ten manuscripts in one post, to have nine come back with drooping heads. But I sent them forth on another voyage by the next mail. I kept a series of crude books with a list of the periodicals and the travels of each

poem or story inscribed therein. Many a manuscript took nine or ten journeys to New York and Boston before it found acceptance. One story declined by nine editors (and ridiculed by the ninth on the margin) brought seventy-five dollars from the tenth—the largest price I had ever received.

My world grew larger with each sunrise, it seemed to me. People from Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago began to write me and seek me out. I was invited to visit city homes, and while this was a delight bordering on ecstasy and a relief from the depressing atmosphere of home anxieties, it yet brought with it the consciousness of the world's demands, which, added to those of duty and necessity, made a larger income imperative.

A Milwaukee editor offered me forty-five dollars a month to edit the literary

department of a trade magazine. I accepted, but the office hours and order of work were wholly distasteful to me. I was not sorry when the venture failed at the expiration of three months. It was the only experience of my life in attempting an office position.

Much of the very earliest work of my pen was devoted to poems on total abstinence—a subject on which the family was very enthusiastic. These verses, some fifty in number, were issued in book form during my teens under the title of “Drops of Water.” I received fifty dollars for the copyright, and am sure Mr. Rockefeller feels no richer today with his millions than I did with my book and check.

Scarcely a year later I published, by subscription, my first miscellaneous collection, “Shells,” now out of print. Then I grew ambitious to write a story in verse

and devoted the best part of a summer to composing "Maurine." Even the name was my own creation—suggested to me by a short poem of Nora Perry's entitled "Norine."

When my book was completed I made a visit to Chicago and called upon Jansen & McClurg, expecting that staid firm to eagerly seize upon my proffered manuscript, which I thought was to bring me world-wide fame and fortune. Instead, it was declined with thanks and I was informed that they had never heard of me. After repeated efforts and failures, I induced a Wisconsin firm to get the book out. It barely paid expenses. But two years later I was made happy by having Jansen & McClurg write and request the privilege of republishing the volume with additional short poems.

Much of my earlier work was tintured



A Recent Picture of Mrs. Wilcox.

Ella Wheeler at 16 years. Miss Wheeler 20 years of age.

with melancholy both real and imaginary. Young poets almost invariably write of sorrow. Naturally of a happy disposition, I had my moods of depression, veritable luxuries of misery.

There was continual worry at home. No one was resigned or philosophical. My mother hated her hard-working lot, for which she was totally unfitted, and constantly rebelled against it like a caged animal beating against iron bars, while she did her distasteful tasks with a Spartan-like adherence to duty, doubting the dominance of an all-wise Ruler who could condemn her to such a lot. Like thousands of others in the world, she had not learned that through love and faith only do conditions change for the better.

The home was pervaded by an atmosphere of discontent and fatigue and irritability.

From reincarnated sources and through prenatal causes I was born with unquenchable hope and unfaltering faith in God and guardian spirits. I often wept myself to sleep after a day of disappointments and worries but woke in the morning singing aloud with the joy of life.

I always expected wonderful things to happen to me.

In some of the hardest days when everything went wrong with everybody at home and all my manuscripts came back for six weeks at a time without one acceptance, I recall looking out of my little north window upon the lonely road bordered with lonelier Lombardy poplars, and thinking, "Before night something beautiful will happen to change everything." There was so much I wanted! I wanted to bestow comfort, ease and pleasure on everybody at home. I wanted

lovely gowns—ah, how I wanted them!—and travel and accomplishments. I wanted summers by the sea—the sea which I had read of but had never seen—and on moonlight nights these longings grew so aggressive I often pinned the curtain down and shut out the rays that seemed to intensify my loneliness, and I would creep into my little couch under the sloping eaves, musing, “Another beautiful night of youth wasted and lost.” And I would awaken happy in spite of myself and put all my previous melancholy into verses—and dollars.

Once I read a sentence which became a life motto to me. “If you haven’t what you like, try to like what you have.” I bless the author of that phrase—it was such a help to me just as I was nearing the borders of the family pessimism and chronic discontent. I tried from that hour

to find something I liked and enjoyed in each day—something I could be thankful for, and I found much, though troubles increased and conditions did not improve about me.

The elder children married and had cares of their own. I was so sorry for them—missing the beautiful things I knew life held.

Slowly, so slowly, it seemed to me, my work and my income increased. I longed for sudden success, for sudden wealth. It was so hard to wait—there was so much to be done. There was a gentle hill south of the house; often on summer evenings, after writing all day, I climbed this ascent at sunset and looked eastward, wondering what lay for me beyond the horizon. I always had the idea that my future would be associated with the far West, yet it was to the East I invariably

looked. My knowledge of the East was bounded by Milwaukee and Chicago—the goal of happy visits two or three times a year.

Sometimes I walked through the pasture and young woods, a half mile, to call on Emma, the one friend who knew and sympathized with all the family troubles. And Emma would walk back with me and we would wonder how many years longer these walks and talks would continue for us. I would tell her of my successes in my work and she and her gentle mother rejoiced in them as if they were their own personal triumphs. Such restful walks and talks they always were. Dear Emma!

When publishing "Maurine" I had purposely omitted more than twoscore poems of a very romantic nature in order to

save the volume from too much sentiment. Letters began to come to me requesting copies of these verses—ardent love songs which had appeared in various periodicals. This suggested to me the idea of issuing a book of love poems to be called “Poems of Passion.” To think was to do—for I possessed more activity than caution in those days.

As just related, every poem in the book had been published in various periodicals and had brought forth no criticism. My amazement can hardly be imagined, therefore, when Jansen & McClurg returned the manuscript of my volume, intimating that it was immoral. I told the contents of their letter to friends in Milwaukee, and it reached the ears of a sensational morning newspaper. The next day a column article appeared with large headlines:—

“TOO LOUD FOR CHICAGO.
“THE SCARLET CITY BY THE LAKE SHOCKED
BY A BADGER GIRL, WHOSE VERSES
OUT-SWINBURNE SWINBURNE AND
OUT-WHITMAN WHITMAN.”

Every newspaper in the land caught up the story and I found myself an object of unpleasant notoriety in a brief space of time. I had always been a local celebrity, but this was quite another experience. Some friends who had admired and praised now criticized—though they did not know why. I was advised to burn my offensive manuscript and assured that in time I might live down the shame I had brought on myself. Yet these same friends had seen these verses in periodicals and praised them.

All this but stimulated me to the only vindication I desired—the publication of my book. A Chicago publisher saw his

opportunity and offered to bring out the book, and it was an immediate success. It has been issued in London also, where it met with immediate favor.

The first proceeds of its sale enabled me to rebuild and improve the old home which was fast going to ruin.

Life, which had been a slowly widening stream for me at this period seemed to unite with the ocean of success and happiness.

My engagement, though not announced, occurred the week my book was issued. One year later, in 1884, I was married to one of God's truest noblemen and came East to live. Burdens long borne alone were lifted by strong, willing hands, and dreams long dreamed became realities, But work, which had been a necessity, had grown to be a habit and still forms a large element of life's pleasures for me.

The questions and longings of those
summer evenings when I stood in the
dying glory of a Wisconsin sunset on the
south hill back of the lonely little home
have all been answered.

For I am one who lives to say
My skies have held more gold than gray,
And that the glory of the real
By far outshines my youth's ideal.



INTERLUDE.



ELLA WHEELER WILCOX discreetly closes the door of her life upon the public, at the marriage altar. But the public of "Ella Wheeler," becomes an interested world for Ella Wheeler Wilcox, so distinctly and persistently her audience enlarges with the years and so universal becomes her reputation.

However she might like to retain her privacy as a wife, and woman, humanity has become her family, and insists upon sitting beside her at home or abroad.

Therefore it seems a necessity to give the public some facts concerning the later life of this poet and author to supplement her early history as given by herself.

Ella Wheeler became Mrs. Robert Wilcox on May 1st, 1884, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Mr. Wilcox was engaged in the manufacture of sterling silver works of art, and his business house, from which he retired June, 1904, still retains his name "The Wilcox and Wagoner Co.," at 41 Union Square, New York.

For six months of each year, from November to May, Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox have resided in the Metropolis and from May to November in their Summer home, "The Bungalow," Short Beach, Conn., a few miles east of Yale College.

Since 1891, when the "Bungalow" was built by Mr. Wilcox, their happiest season of the year has been passed in that artistic spot, a veritable paradise both within and without.

During the early years of her married life, Mrs. Wilcox made a happy home in

New York for a niece of her own, a nephew and niece of her husband and for one or two young proteges in whom she became interested. All are now successful young men and women in various vocations of life, and all devotedly attached to Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox.

A son (an only child) was born to Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox on May 27, 1887, and lived but a few hours.

Mrs. Wilcox's Sunday afternoon receptions have been a feature of the artistic and literary life in the Metropolis. Of her summer life at "The Bungalow," the following account written by one of her girlhood friends is given.

E. T.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX'S SUMMER HOME.



IN the heart of Ella Wheeler Wilcox it is written that every day is the best day of the year.

For over twenty-nine years she has been repeatedly saying or writing to me: "This is the happiest summer of my life!"

Of buoyant spirits, and one of the few who are born believing, not doubting; born hoping, not fearing; born to realize what it is to have lived an hour, rather than feel that another hour of life has passed, Ella Wheeler Wilcox naturally exemplified the maxims of Emerson—even without knowing it—years ago in her optimistic girlhood.

The season of 1904 is just closing at her summer home, near New Haven, where she passes six months each year. The spot which has become so famous, and is already distinctly historic, is reached by trolley from New Haven and is known as Short Beach. In a characteristic letter, she pronounced the past few months "the very best of fourteen summers at the Bungalow." On the scene, I comprehend the supremacy of each, with its recurring pleasures ever being enriched by memories.

From California to Connecticut was a long, long journey. From the white breakers and barren sands of the Pacific to the rocky, wooded shores of the blue Long Island Sound, was quite an extensive pilgrimage. But I declared that I must see with my own eyes this already famous Eden or Paradise of the Poets, created by Robert and Ella Wheeler Wilcox.



FIREPLACE IN MRS. WILCOX'S STUDY IN THE BUNGALOW.

So I traveled over leagues and leagues of mountain, valley, desert and prairie space to feel the touch of a glad white hand, and hear its owner's magnetic voice of welcome.

No description of the place has been adequate. Dare I even attempt one? The home of Ella Wheeler Wilcox is as unusual as the individual. It is equally indescribable. The stamp of her genius is upon it now, during her lifetime, and before her fame has reached its zenith, only because of her husband's prophetic insight and full appreciation. Her home is a wonderful monument that he is devotedly shaping for her pleasure and inspiration, apparently, but with the foreknowledge, also, that it is a shrine, yet to be sought and valued in American literary history.

In at least four of the rooms of the two houses known as "The Bungalow" and "The Barracks," autograph pictures, souve-

nirs of travel in different lands; original oil paintings of Ella Wheeler Wilcox and her various surroundings, and in manifold posings, presented by the famous artists themselves ; water-color sketches, executed right on the walls by her gifted artist guests ; original verse by famous poets and music by famous musicians, to enthrall the gazer for hours.

On every side and in every corner are trophies and treasures to attract and distract attention, and in every detail of arrangement Mr. Wilcox, it seems to me, has thought of posterity, and how those who have been helped by a singing soul will stand upon the stones that he has had carved, and that lead up to the Bungalow, and will sit in the significant spots and feast their eyes upon the eloquent proofs of his love for her, and of the love of those who have enjoyed his and her hospitality for many blessed years.

When the Bungalow began to be overcrowded with treasures and the succession of house parties became an established custom, instead of building the conventional wing or addition needed, Mr. Wilcox wisely had another house erected. It meets all domestic requirements and has ample suites for guests. Because of it the Bungalow is devoted exclusively to her ladyship. The annex, appropriately named "The Barracks," has some features quite as unique and charming as the first house.

The dining room is a sightly one, but the outside views cannot long beguile the glances of guests. The handwriting on the walls is eloquent. A talented young artist, who is a member of the household, has for a number of years retraced with her paint brush the original lines, using black paint for words and red for capital letters. This leaves everything clear and brightly illum-

inated. The chimney side-wall is full and space on the opposite side is filling rapidly.

It was on Sunday morning, August 21, that those who gathered around the breakfast table read in fresh lettering, with the autograph of the hostess below, and in the center of all (which had been the only bit of space left):

“ Love and the sea and summer—
What could blend
With that rare mixture but a perfect friend?
Therefore, we summon from the court of art
The aristocracy of brain and heart.”

Of course, each friend under the hospitable roof must have deemed herself the perfect one alluded to, and there was no lack of harmony, and the little queen of the quill and the festive board, who had beckoned a group from afar, did seem to have reached the climax of contentment with so much

love, so much sea and so much summer all about her.

Below her verse is the autograph of Creator; near it are these lines, signed Ralph Waldo Trine :

“So runs life’s law—what one lives in his thought world sooner or later he will find objectified in his life.”

Under these lines are some by Edwin Markham with his signature :

“Place where passing souls can rest
On their way and do their best.”

Below these Justin Huntly McCarthy has written :

“Omar, the tent-maker, Omar, the seer,
Believed in seven heavens, sphere on sphere—
But had he known this earthly paradise
He would have said: ‘Another heaven is here.’ ”

Lines and signatures of Wallace Bruce, Josephine Gro, Amelia Bingham, Zona Gale, Ridgely Torrence, Charles Hanson Towne, etc., follow. The latter wrote :

“ Abou Ben Adhem (God bless old Ben)
Said ‘ Write me as one who loved his fellowmen.’
But I now say and so will you I know,
‘ Write me as one who loves the Bungalow.’ ”

Framed photos with autographs of Henry George, Anthony Hope, William Gillette, Marshall P. Wilder and many others are interspersed with the written Bungalow and Barracks' praises of Julie Opp Faversham, Helen Bartlett Bridgman, Hartley Manners, and hosts of well-known musicians, artists and writers. There are bars of music, and exquisite little sketches of the rocks, the Angora pets, the boats and the sea.

Carl Blenner, famous for beautiful heads, has put one of his finest on the walls. He comes here regularly every summer. Mabel Williamson (known as “ Billy ” in the Bungalow fraternity) has left a charming picture of the stone steps in front, under which she has written :

“Lovers’ Lane, as you may know
Leads up to the Bungalow.”

Dear friends of the hostess here at this time form a coterie from New York, and their names are not unfamiliar even to a Californian—Theodosia Garrison, Martha Jordan-Fischel, Kate Jordan Vermilye and Gertrude Lynch.

On the way here I saw the homes of Longfellow and Lowell in Boston, and of Emerson, Hawthorne and the Alcotts in Concord. With loyal emotions I gazed upon their exteriors. Far-sighted and spiritually gifted is the man who, if the transcendent genius of all American women poets, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, died today, could, from all appearances, after making a few changes, allow the doors to open to all who prize the hallowed associations of the goddess.

Here is her pretty desk, near wide windows, facing the broad Atlantic, and the

picturesque coves where the row boats rock, and the bathers sun themselves on bright mornings, and the birds build nests on overhanging branches, and where she pens thoughts that are helping the world to be more loving and cheerful, more humane, more philosophic and more progressive.

There is a shelf on which stand the many books she has published, and from which, perhaps, someone, perhaps a boy who now chases butterflies, will gather material for the careful classification of her prolific writings. Over in the corner on a big, pillow-piled divan her noted Angora cats are curled in purring slumber, or are lifting their handsome heads to listen to her caressing tone.

On the long, vine-covered porches encircling the Bungalow, are large swinging chairs, aeolian harps that never cease playing their soft wind tunes as the sea breezes sway

them, and tables with names of distinguished visitors carved on the tops (their hand-writings made indelible with Mrs. Wilcox's sharp knife).

All the hieroglyphics belong to contemporary writers, poets, artists, or actors, some of national and some of international reputation, who have been callers at the Bungalow, coming out from New York, or favored house guests for several days, forming congenial groups of literati from everywhere.

Hardly an hour of any day passes from June to September or October that does not find strangers alighting from the cars at Bungalow Lane. They are eager to see the celebrated home of the poet, and if possible to have an interview with her or catch a glimpse of her on the quaint rustic bridge or the massive rocks, watch her skillful swimming or, at a safe distance, laughingly take a

kodak picture as she feeds her Angoras under the oak trees.

Her nearest neighbors in the adjacent cottages glide in and out of the Bungalow quite informally, never stopping to rap, stealing away silently if they see her busy at her desk or chatting with visitors—dropping in so often, however, that I wonder how or when she gets enough alone to accomplish all she does. Since I have been here the number and variety of persons who have come to consult her on all sorts of projects, ask and give advice, bring her flowers, books, pictures, offer homage of some kind and vanish with an air of proud satisfaction, have impressed me like the moving scenes of the biograph.

When not writing she is the very soul of democratic geniality, and anyone can approach her and rejoice in her sympathetic attention, but in spite of so much publicity

there is the strange anomaly of real seclusion at the Bungalow.

The daily mail delivered at the Bungalow is almost a perambulating town post office itself.

I doubt if there is any writer in this or any other country whose private correspondence is of such infinite variety. This is because there is no literary man or woman of genius that I can think of who is so universal in her sympathies as Ella Wheeler Wilcox; who has reached all classes of readers, high, medium, low and lowly; lovers of song and story; lovers of art, philosophy, religion, humanitarianism, reform. Her work and her name are familiar to every type of thinkers, toilers, dreamers and visionaries, and the great mass of the successful and unsuccessful are represented by those who crave the personal element in their relations with her. Hundreds who fail to see her, or talk with

her, or receive answers to their letters get the pertinent reply in her printed poems or articles.

I believe that no human soul appeals to her in vain for such light, or aid, or uplifts as she can give.

Who could have predicted years ago when Ella Wheeler of Wisconsin wrote "Solitude" (which she read to me enthusiastically in the midst of its production, and which was spontaneous excepting a few lines she was perfecting), that she would reach just as many people eventually by her prose writings as by her verses.

But I believe her best poems are yet to be written. She has the genius to express in rhymed lines or blank verse that which will give the nearest approach to immortality that any American writer thus far has even tentatively suggested.

ELLA GILES RUDDY.

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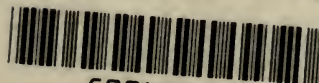
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